STAR WARS DARTH VADER

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STAR WARS®
DARTH VADER
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009

Book II, Part III

SHADOWS AND SECRETS

It is a period of insurgence. After the destruction of the Death Star by a Force-strong rebel pilot, the Sith Lord DARTH VADER was deemed responsible by his master, Emperor Palpatine. Enlisting the help of archaeologist DOCTOR APHRA and droids, Beetee and Triple-Zero, Vader is able to pursue his own agenda under the Empire's ever watchful eye.

Using the expertise of Aphra and a carefully selected crew of bounty hunters, Vader looted a stash of credits from an Imperial cruiser under the guise of an accident. Complete with a droid army, a team of bounty hunters, and an Imperial fortune on hand, Vader is one step closer to finding the rebel pilot.

Now in the Anthan system, Vader's new adjutant Imperial Inspector Thanoth gets to the bottom of what happened on the ill-fated Imperial cruiser....

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Anthan 13.
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THAT'S VADER'S TIE FIGHTER.
HE IS HERE *ALONE*.
IT'S GOT TO BE A TRAP.
NO ONE'S THIS LUCKY. RANDOM SIGHTING AND NOW WE GET A CHANCE AT DARTH VADER?
THAT'S A RISK WE'RE ALL WILLING TO TAKE FOR A CHANCE TO PUT VADER IN OUR SIGHTS...

...AND WE ONLY NEED TO BE LUCKY ONCE.

AT LAST.

THE REBELLION HAS MANY FAILINGS.
YOUR SLOWNESS IS MOST AGGRAVATING.

Anthan Prime
Orbital Dockyard.
THANOTH TO VADER...
WHAT IS IT?
I'M SET UP ON ANTHAN PRIME. I NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE, IMMEDIATELY.
I BELIEVE I HAVE A LEAD TO THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ROBBERY...

WHAT MADE YOU SO SURE IT WAS A CRIME AND NOT AN ACCIDENT?
ACCIDENTS HAPPEN. ACCIDENTS CAN BE MADE TO HAPPEN. TAGGE WANTED ME TO HAVE A CLOSER LOOK. HE HAD ALREADY BUDGETED THOSE RESOURCES TOWARDS A SUPER STAR DESTROYER.
YOU KNOW TAGGE AND HIS SUPER STAR DESTROYERS.
I EXAMINED ITS SYSTEMS. THERE WAS NO SIGN OF INTERFERENCE. IN FACT, SUSPICIOUSLY LITTLE SIGN OF INTERFERENCE.
WITH A METEOR STRIKE, I'D HAVE EXPECTED MUCH MORE BASAL DISRUPTION. I SUSPECT THE LOGS WERE RESET TO FACTORY DEFAULTS BY THE CRIMINALS TO COVER THEIR ACTIONS.
I WAS SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THE MAIN PENETRATION, TOO. NOT WHAT I'D HAVE EXPECTED FROM A NORMAL ASTEROID.
IT'D HAVE REQUIRED AN UNUSUALLY HIGH METAL CONTENT...
MY THEORY IS A SMALL TEAM MANUFACTURED A METEOR STORM WITH EXPLOSIVES AND USED IT TO COVER THE FACT THEY'D DISABLED THE SHIP WITH AN ION CHARGE.
BOARDED, LOCATED THE VAULT, AND THEN MANUALLY FIRED AN ENHANCED METEOR TO CREATE A BREACH, EJECTING EVERYTHING INTO SPACE...
...AND THEN COLLECTED THEIR PROVERBIAL ILL-GOTTEN GAINS.
BUT YOU COULD BE MISTAKEN...
I CAN'T BE SURE, BUT IT SEEMS LOGICAL ENOUGH.
I HOPE YOU ARE CORRECT.
MY TIME IS TOO PRECIOUS TO SPEND CHASING PHANTOMS.

I AGREE, FOR BOTH OF US. FRANKLY, LOCATING EVEN A SIZEABLE FORTUNE FEELS A LITTLE BENEATH US...
STILL--WHILE THESE CRIMINALS ARE PROFESSIONAL, THEY DIDN'T CONSIDER PEOPLE OF OUR CALIBER WOULD BE AFTER THEM. WE CAN FINISH THIS QUICKLY AND RETURN TO MORE SERIOUS WORK.
ACTUALLY, REGARDING WORK. I DID MEAN TO ASK....
YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN ON ANTHAN PRIME TO OVERSEE THE TRANSFER OF THE SHIPMENT--WHAT ACTUALLY BROUGHT YOU TO ANTHAN 13?
I PURSUED A REBEL CELL THERE.
I DEALT WITH THEM.
IT WASN'T REPORTED.
I DO NOT CONSIDER ELIMINATING A FEW REBELS A MATTER THAT REQUIRES COMMENT.
IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY GO AND SEE THE REMAINS YOURSELF.

Far Beneath Anthan Prime.
WHOM DO WE SEEK?
EVENTUALLY? A GENTLEMAN WHO GOES BY "THE DRAGON." MOST INFAMOUS OF THE ARMS DEALERS IN THE AREA. IF THEY GOT EXPLOSIVES, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THROUGH HIM.
ONE OF HIS DEALERS WILL BE HERE. DOOWAN. A SOMEWHAT COARSE GENTLEMAN WHO I SUSPECT WILL REQUIRE A LITTLE PERSUASION.
AND WHERE IS "HERE"?
A DROID FIGHTING DEN. ACTUAL BLOOD FIGHTS ARE ILLEGAL ON ANTHAN. AS SUCH, THEY HAVE GRAY ESTABLISHMENTS THAT TICKLE THAT URGE.
"GRAY"?
THE ATTRACTIONS ARE JUST ABOUT LEGAL. THE CLIENTELE IS ENTIRELY NOT, WHICH MAKES IT AN EXCELLENT PLACE FOR LOCATING ELEMENTS SUCH AS DOOWAN...
WE WILL ACT QUIETLY. IT IS BEST IF WE DON'T...
...AH.

LORD... VADER?
YOU ARE NOT EXPECTED.
THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE! THE CRIMINAL ELEMENTS GATHER BENEATH STONES.
WE MUST LIFT THEM CAREFULLY.
WE'RE... SEALING THE PERIMTER. AS ORDERED, SIR.
STEP ASIDE!
HMM. WHOEVER COULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS UNCOUTHNESS?

THE TWINS.
WHAT *ARE* THEY DOING?

RUDIMENTARY, IF EFFECTIVE BLADE WORK.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE YOU'VE WATCHED ANOTHER LIGHTSABER WIELDED IN ANGER, I SUSPECT.
DOES IT MAKE YOU NOSTALGIC?

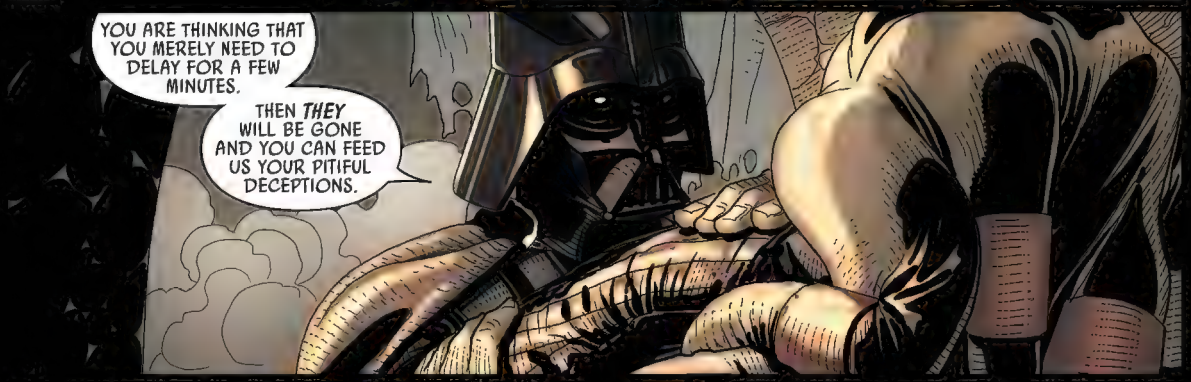
NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST.
AH...

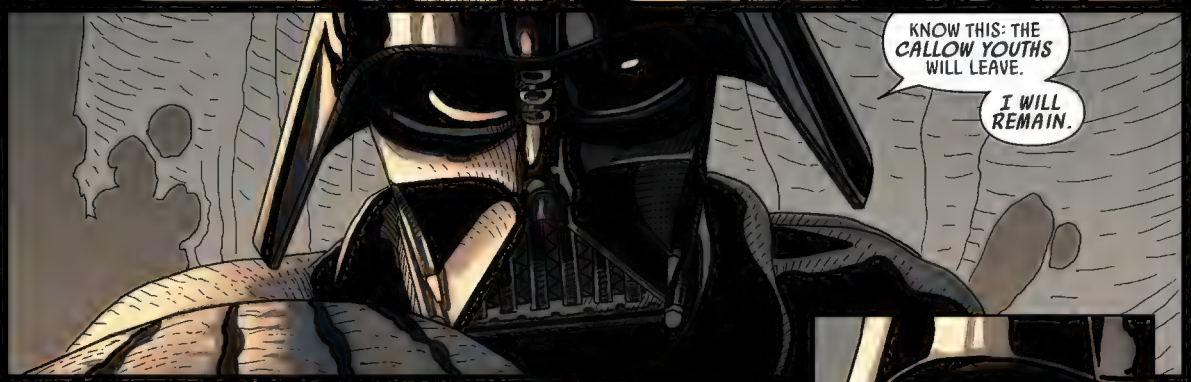
"...THERE'S OUR MAN DOOWAN."
DOOWAN! A WORD, IF YOU WILL!
STEP CLOSER AND I'LL--
GOOD TO SEE YOU, TOO. I TRUST YOU'RE WELL?
THIS IS MY COLLEAGUE, LORD VADER. WE WANTED TO HAVE A FEW WORDS.

HMM. A LITTLE LOUD OUT HERE. PERHAPS A WORD IN A QUIET CORNER...
THIS WILL DO.
THANK YOU, LORD VADER.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK ON ANTHAN?
I MISSED THE SOCIAL SCENE.
I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING.
THERE'S TOO MANY WITNESSES.
INCREASINGLY FEWER WITH EVERY SECOND.
AND I THINK YOU'LL RATHER TALK WITH US THAN RETURN TO THE FRAY...

...WHAT DO YOU WANT?
THE DRAGON. HIS WHEREABOUTS.

I... I...LET ME THINK.


YOU ARE THINKING THAT YOU MERELY NEED TO DELAY FOR A FEW MINUTES.
THEN *THEY* WILL BE GONE AND YOU CAN FEED US YOUR PITIFUL DECEPTIONS.


KNOW THIS: THE *CALLOW YOUTHS* WILL LEAVE.
I WILL REMAIN.

THE DRAGON IS OFF-PLANET ON THE MID-MOONS.
ANTHAN 12.
A LIE.

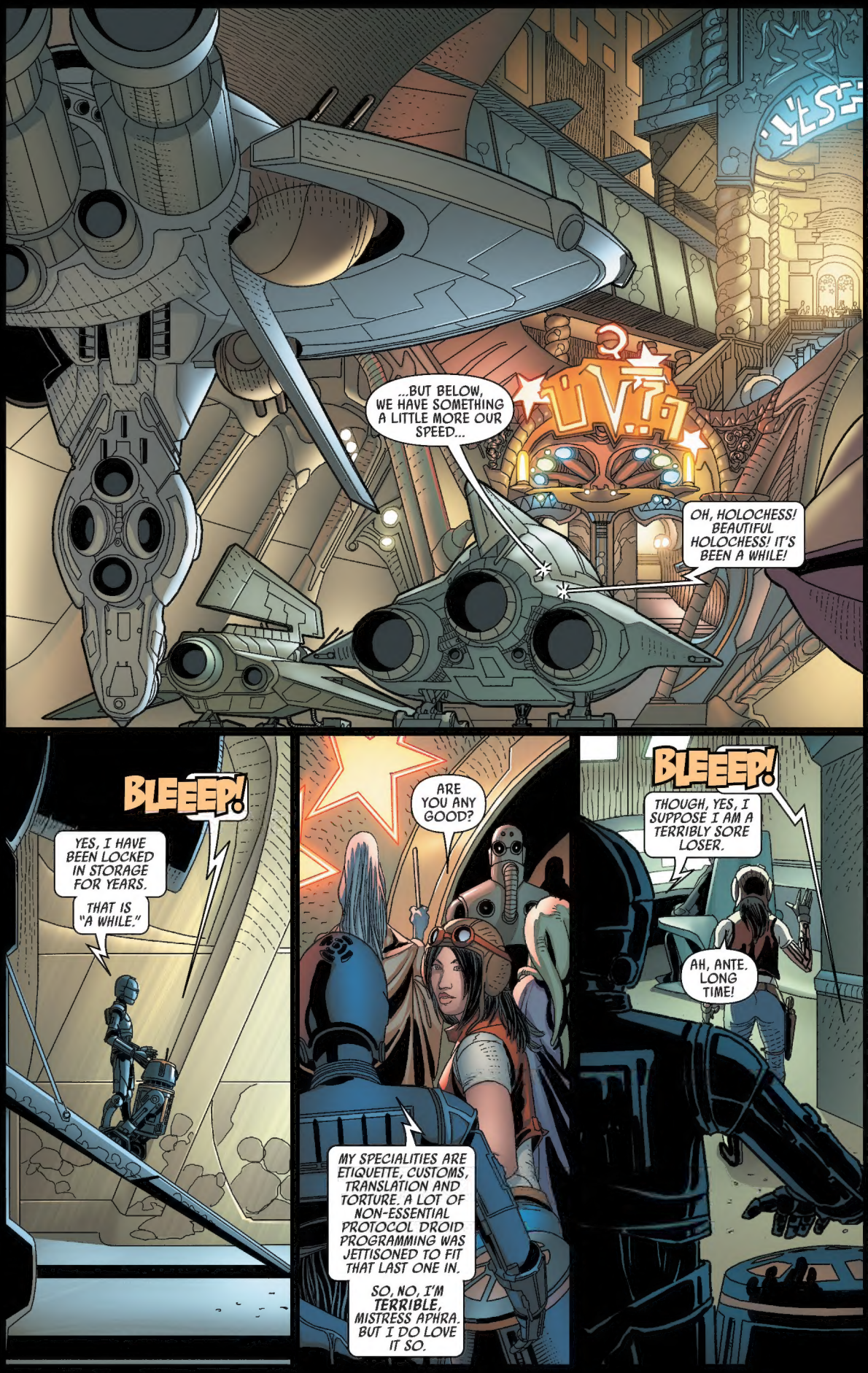
HE'S... HE'S...
HIS MANSION'S IN THE LOWER REACH OF PRIME'S EASTWARD CORE. 241-86-1872.
TRUTH.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CIVIC-MINDED GENEROSITY, DOOWAN.
I SEE THE TWO YOUNGSTERS HAVE CALMED DOWN.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN HELP THEM A LITTLE, WITH THE CAREFUL HAND OF EXPERIENCE...
GOOD DAY, MORIT. GOOD DAY, AIONIN.
THIS IS DOOWAN. HE KNOWS MANY PEOPLE IN THE ARMS SUPPLY BUSINESS. I DARE-SAY THEY'VE SUPPLIED THE PLASMA DEVILS.
AS SUCH, THIS MAN MAY BE OF SOME USE IN YOUR INVESTIGATIONS...
HE CAN.

AND WHAT, PRECISELY, DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

A SHOW OF FORCE. WE HAVE NO LAURELS TO REST ON, NO REPUTATION.
NOW THE PLANET KNOWS WHO WE ARE... AND WHAT WE WILL DO TO ANYONE WHO OPPOSES US.
IT'S MESSY, BUT NECESSARY.
NOW ALL CAN SEE HOW BLOODY THE IMPERIAL FIST CAN BE.
WE CANNOT AFFORD TO SHOW ANY OF THE USUAL WEAKNESS.
HMM. I SUPPOSE THEY WOULD STOP THE PLASMA DEVILS IF THEY KILLED EVERY SINGLE LIVING THING IN THIS SECTOR.
CHILDREN.
ONE SHOULD NEVER SEND CHILDREN TO DO AN ADULT'S JOB, LORD VADER.
AND WE LIVE IN A UNIVERSE BRIMMING FULL OF CHILDREN.
HMMM.
YOU'RE QUIET. NOT A SURPRISE. THAT ALIGNS WITH YOUR REPUTATION.
YOU'RE ALSO PASSIVE. THIS DOES NOT.

YOU'RE A MAN WHO HAS BESTRODE THE GALACTIC STAGE... YET I AM TAKING LEAD.
I COULDN'T WISH FOR A BETTER IMPLIED THREAT THAN YOUR PRESENCE, LORD VADER, BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER ABOUT YOUR MOTIVATION...
THE LAST MAN TAGGE SENT WAS A TRAITOR.
I'M TRYING TO ASCERTAIN IF YOU ARE... DANGEROUS.
OH, I AM, LORD VADER...
...BUT ONLY TO THE ENEMIES OF THE EMPIRE.

ARK ANGEL REQUESTING LANDING....
I BELIEVE A VESSEL SUCH AS YOURS MUST BE HERE FOR THE TRADESMAN'S ENTRANCE.
Anthan Prime.
OH, HOW RUDE.
LET'S KILL THEM.
NO, TRIPLE-ZERO. WE SHOULD KNOW OUR PLACE.
HOLIDAY RESORT FOR THE HYPER-RICH UP TOP...


...BUT BELOW, WE HAVE SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE OUR SPEED...
OH, HOLOCHESS! BEAUTIFUL HOLOCHESS! IT'S BEEN A WHILE!
BLEEEP!
YES, I HAVE BEEN LOCKED IN STORAGE FOR YEARS.
THAT IS "A WHILE."
ARE YOU ANY GOOD?
MY SPECIALITIES ARE ETIQUETTE, CUSTOMS, TRANSLATION AND TORTURE. A LOT OF NON-ESSENTIAL PROTOCOL DROID PROGRAMMING WAS JETTISONED TO FIT THAT LAST ONE IN.
SO, NO, I'M TERRIBLE, MISTRESS APHRA. BUT I DO LOVE IT SO.
BLEEEP!
THOUGH, YES, I SUPPOSE I AM A TERRIBLY SORE LOSER.
AH, ANTE. LONG TIME!

FIRST, THAT'S "THE ANTE." SECONDLY, IT'S BEEN A LONG, LONG TIME SINCE YOU COULD AFFORD MY RATES, APHRA. BUT NOW YOU'VE CLEARED YOUR SLATE...
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR? AND BEFORE YOU START... I STRESS I HAVE A LOT OF INFORMATION ABOUT SOME PARTICULARLY ELUSIVE INDIVIDUALS.
I KNOW. ANYTHING WORTH KNOWING HAS PASSED THROUGH THAT BIG BALD BRAIN OF YOURS.
COMMODEX TAHN.
THIS IS WHAT WE'VE GOT.
HMM.
...DONE.
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT GUY?
MILITARY CLERK IN THE REPUBLIC ERA, BEFORE LEAVING SERVICE AND ENTERING THE FAMILY TRADE UPON THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER. RETIRED NOW FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS...
THERE ARE NO REFUNDS.
NO, HE'S THE ONE.
GIVE ME EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT.

APHRA, YOU'VE JUST SPENT A LOT OF MONEY TO GET INFORMATION YOU COULD PROBABLY HAVE FOUND THROUGH OFFICIAL RECORDS...
I DID. BUT YOU'RE FASTER AND FAR MORE DISCREET.
THAT I AM. GOOD DOING BUSINESS, APHRA.
BLEEEP!
I HAVE TO AGREE WITH BEETEE, MISTRESS. THIS "COMMODEX TAHN" DOESN'T SOUND LIKE SOMEONE WHO COULD POSSIBLY BE OF INTEREST TO THE MASTER.
PROBABLY NOT. I MEAN, JUST A BORING CAREER IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS...
THEY WERE MORTICIANS...
...ON NABOO.

THE EMPIRE WRITES BACK

DARTH VADER

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away is a lot easier to get to than you think – and we want to hear from you! Write us at StarWars@Marvel.com if you want to make it onto a future letters page. Don't forget to mark the letter "OK TO PRINT."

Dear Marvel,

Thank you for including Episodes I-III into your storyline about Darth Vader. Anakin, a.k.a. Vader, has always been my favorite character. I love his fall from grace as well as his rise out of the darkness and back into the light. The story of *Star Wars* made me want to be a writer when I grew up. I always thought it was odd that Anakin did nothing when he found out Luke was his kid. Not even question Palpatine how Padmé could have given birth if he had killed her. Now you guys showed that scene that I've been thinking of for so long. While I was reading the scene I got chills.

Stephen Bove

The response to that scene has been all kinds of overwhelming. As I've said elsewhere, my first cinema experience was going to see *Empire*. As such, writing the other half of the "Luke, I am your Father" experience is a once-in-a-career experience. I really can't believe Jason and I got to do that. It really is humbling. - Kieron

Hi there!

When I heard that Marvel had bought the *Star Wars* comics franchise from Dark Horse I was a little worried. My fear is now officially gone as I am loving the *Star Wars* and *Darth Vader* series. I grab them both every month taking care not to miss an issue. They are both great but I must confess I enjoy reading *Darth Vader* the most. I guess he's a guilty pleasure. I know I shouldn't like him but he's just so damn good at what he does. You guys have done a great job with Vader and it shows. I know Vader will eventually tear them apart, but will he be going up against his new rivals personally in combat? They have no knowledge of the Force and personally I would love to see Vader rip them to shreds, especially that cocky snot-nosed boy who I think Vader spared only to really feast on later.

Thanks,
Brian

Hmm. How to phrase this? Let's try: I think awesome lightsaber duels against cybernetic opponents are a safe bet for future episodes. That sounds like the sort of thing we'll do. - Kieron

I just wanted to express my gratitude on revitalizing my interest in *Star Wars* again. I was originally only going to purchase the first issue of *Darth Vader* but quickly found myself immersed into this well-written and beautifully illustrated story. You have brought more depth to this legendary character's story that just leaves me wanting more. Thank you for all your hard work. You are all clearly passionate about this story and I find it infectious.

Ken

Thank you. It's an easy book to be passionate about. I've been known to throw myself out of bed in the morning and run downstairs when I find myself thinking about a particularly amusing way for Vader to kill people. - Kieron

Hi,

It's a nice idea to have letters in your comic books. Stan the Man or George Lucas should answer them, right? ;-) Well, with *The Force Awakens* coming up and *Princess Leia* and *Darth Vader* the Force is strong this year. I hope Salvador Larroca will do more comics for you. By the way, I think *Darth Vader* is entertaining for adults, but I worry there will be some Jar Jar stories coming up sooner or later. Scary this is.

Take care
Stefan Svik

I hope Episode VIII ends with a credits sequence where they answer letters about *The Force Awakens*. - Kieron

Dear Star Warriors,

I want to say first off, thank you guys for creating some of the most awesome *Star Wars* stories I've read in a long time. I am particularly happy with the *Darth Vader* series where I am not only enjoying Kieron's and Sal's interpretations of Vader but his supporting cast as well. Oh, and I also really like the fight you guys had in the *Star Wars* ongoing between Luke and Boba Fett.

It's cool also that what you guys are doing is considered canon. That being said, it's nice to know how Vader learned how Luke was his son. If I have any concerns at all, it's that I hope that not all of Dark Horse's and the expanded novels' work will be for naught. I would particularly hate for us to lose Mara Jade and some of the other characters that were created.

Anyway, I wish you all the best. May the Force be with you.

Jason

We do talk to the Lucasfilm Story Group about Legends characters we could re-introduce. In short: you never know. - Kieron

Hey there!

I just finished *Darth Vader #7*, and I loved the quip from Triple-Zero at the beginning. Just when you thought that droid might say something sympathetic... WHAM! "Those poor droids." I laughed. To everyone working on the new *Star Wars* comics, great job so far, and keep up the good work! I can't wait to see where these books go next!

Chris

I'd say Triple-Zero writes himself, but that's risking Marvel saying, "Well, you don't get paid for writing him then" and I like money. But he's a character who rarely is short of things to say in any situation. Mainly murderous ones. He's not a one-note character, of course. He has two notes – murder and torture. Also, holochess. - Kieron

Hi guys!

I've been a hardcore *Star Wars* fan since I was a little kid, and I love the *Darth Vader* series. The job of my fellow Spanish artist Salvador Larroca with the Lord of the Sith is superb, and Gillen's plot is intriguing and perfectly suited to his mysterious and tragic personality. At first I was skeptical regarding Vader's visit to Tatooine (something taboo according to many books and comics due to his unbearably painful feelings attached to Anakin's previous life), but the way it's been handled in this new issue is satisfactory and credible. Obi-Wan is dead, he already knows that his son is alive, and now he can return to the sand planet even if he does not want to. The effort that he puts into trying to erase in any possible way (both physically and emotionally) the trace of his old master's existence reaches its highest point with the use of the molecular bomb. And also, we see the most badass Rodian ever! Looking forward to the next issue!

Thanks and keep up the great work,
Javier Peinado

Thanks, Javier. I agree with you on Tatooine, and wrote a lot about why I think it was absolutely essential that Vader did what he did. But never again, eh? - Kieron

NEXT:

10/7/15